

## MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

M: 19/13-3  
Germantown H.D.  
MAGI#

## INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC Liberty Milling Company

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER Mateney Road and Route 118

CITY, TOWN Germantown

VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8

STATE Maryland

COUNTY

Montgomery

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☐ BUILDING(S)☒ STRUCTURE (Silo)☒ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☒ COMMERCIAL☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ ENTERTAINMENT☐ GOVERNMENT☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ MILITARY☐ MUSEUM☐ PARK☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☐ RELIGIOUS☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**NAME K.E. & M.A. Klevinger - 15,466 ft.  
Town and County Fences - .20 acre

Telephone #: 428-3800

STREET &amp; NUMBER

19301 Mateney Road

CITY, TOWN

Germantown

VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 20767

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Montgomery County Courthouse

Liber #: 4234 4795  
Folio #: 475 759

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

M-NCPPC Inventory of Historical Sites

DATE

1976

☐ FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☒ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Park Historian's Office

CITY, TOWN

Rockville

STATE

Maryland 20855

M: 19-13-3

**7 DESCRIPTION**

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD (Silos)	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED (Mill)		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

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In 1970 a fire destroyed the Liberty Milling Company of Germantown. All that remains of the Company's plant is a cluster of six poured concrete silos arranged in two rows of three on an east-west axis. Each silo is set into a rectangular poured concrete base. The two west silos have a seam which extends the full height of the silo. On the south side of the silos there is a tall (approximately four stories) narrow structure with raised seam metal siding. Attached to the east is a two story structure with raised seam metal siding. There are double metal doors leading into this smaller structure on the south elevation. Both east and west buildings have gabled roofs covered by raised seam metal.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1895

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

On May 2, 1895, William U. Bowman, Charles R. Bowman, and Eldridge Z. Bowman purchased from Elizabeth M. Blunt, for \$800, an 8,000 square foot lot in Germantown, bounded by the Metropolitan Branch of the B & O Railroad, the Germantown Depot lot, and the 50 foot wide depot road. (Since the railroad's completion in 1873, the B & O had refused to put in a siding at Germantown until a depot road was opened, lessening the station's importance and undoubtedly greatly inconveniencing the depot's patrons. The road was finally commissioned on May 19, 1874.)<sup>1</sup> These three sons of Francis Asbury Bowman of Cedar Grove appear to have been merchants prior to their entrance into the milling business, and in 1895 were referred to as "...partners trading under the firm, name and style of Bowman Brothers."<sup>2</sup>

It was on this prime commercial lot that the Bowman Brothers, shortly after 1895, constructed their steam operated flour mill. This is evidenced by the fact that on April 15, 1899, Eldridge Z. Bowman sold his undivided title and interest in the company to his two brothers for \$2,500; this included all his "...undivided interest in and to all the machinery contained in or attached to the buildings on said land and premises and the stock carried on hand belonging to the firm of Bowman Brothers."<sup>3</sup>

The company expanded in 1911, when, on January 11 of that year they purchased from Joseph A. Sponcellar for \$1,800 the 7,466 square foot lot adjacent to their original parcel, thus extending the mill tract out to the Germantown-Neelsville Church Road (Route 118).<sup>4</sup> However, only three years later, in 1914, the mill succumbed to the commonest of mill hazards, fire, and burned to the ground. The Bowman Brothers are said to have rebuilt the mill shortly thereafter, but did not long continue to mill flour in Germantown. The operation was soon to be purchased in toto by a newly incorporated firm, The Liberty Milling Company.

On November 30, 1918, Stanley P.F. Kline, of Boonsboro, Maryland; William C. Greeting, of Keedysville, Maryland; Augustus R. Selby, of Shepardstown, West Virginia; and Herbert Kline, of Mt. Airy, Maryland, met and drafted the incorporation papers of the Liberty Milling Company. The stated purpose of their association was to engage in "...buying, selling,

(Continued on Page 2)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

Statement of Significance. continued

and manufacturing flour and other such articles as may be manufactured from cereal grains; to buy, sell, and deal in all kinds of grain, feed, fertilizer, coal, lumber, hardware, and all other kinds of merchandise; and to acquire, buy, lease, or purchase such real estate and other property and equipment as may be necessary or useful for the transaction of business aforesaid".<sup>5</sup> The initial amount of capital stock was \$25,000, divided into 500 shares of \$50 per share.

Thus prepared, the Liberty Milling Company, on December 7, 1918, purchased from William, Charles, and Eldrige Bowman, for \$25,000, the two lots and the milling business in Germantown, and Augustus R. Selby, who had worked in his father's Howard County mill and his own Shepards-town, West Virginia mill, became the resident agent of the corporation.

Immediately the Liberty Milling Company set about to improve upon the Bowman Brothers operations. In 1919, a new grain elevator was erected. In 1920, the first grain dryer in the area was installed; this was a piece of equipment which unquestionably saved local farmers uncounted bushels of grain which would otherwise have rotted before becoming usable. In 1922, Liberty Mill became the first plant in Montgomery County to mix hog, poultry and dairy feeds. Previously, local farmers were forced to purchase mixed feeds from the larger mid-western mills. The corporation appears to have weathered the depression well, and in 1930, concrete tanks to increase grain storage capacity were constructed, and additional drying equipment was installed. On April 11, 1935, the company purchased an additional 0.20 acres, on the other side of the depot lot, on which a new building was erected the following year. And, in evidence of the mill's mounting prosperity, an increase in the corporation's capital stock was ratified by a stockholders' meeting in Germantown, on April 13, 1935; that is, an increase from the initial amount of \$25,000 in 1918 to \$100,000 in 1935 (2,000 shares at \$50 per share).<sup>6</sup>

By the 1950's, the Liberty Milling Company was enjoying sales in excess of \$1 million and catering to a world flour market, making it then the second largest mill in the state. It had a 500 bag per day output, an 85,000 bushel storage capacity, and a drying capacity of 500 bushels per hour. Grain from local and out of state farms was received at the mill's own four-car railroad siding, and a fleet of five trucks delivered the milled products to local merchants, feed dealers and farmers. The mill principally ground corn, soft winter wheat, and some barley for their own labels (Blue Ribbon, Liberty, Gold Leaf, and Silver Leaf) but, in addition, bagged flour for private brands of wholesale grocery houses. Additional machinery was installed as late as 1955, in the form of drying equipment and corn-receiving machinery.

Yet, despite the concerted efforts of the corporation's directors in keeping pace with the modernization of the milling industry, the Liberty Milling Company declined steadily in the 1960's, falling to the general demise of the small milling business. On February 20, 1965, the directors retired 560 shares of stock, thus reducing the capital of the corporation from \$100,000 to \$72,000, and on June 4, 1966, it was agreed upon by the directors to dissolve the corporation.<sup>7</sup> The mill was purchased in 1967 by the Carroll V. Grosse Co. of Maryland, Inc., who

Liberty Milling Company

continued its operations for a short period under the name of the Liberty Milling Company. However, the mill continued to lose business under the new ownership, and soon was shut down permanently. The mill was finally lost to fire in the early 1970's.

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FOOTNOTES

1. Mont. Co. Land Records EBP 13/227
2. ibid. JA 49/72
3. ibid. TD 8/163
4. ibid. 216/470
5. Mont. Co. Corporation Records JLB 1/122
6. ibid. CKW 1/208
7. ibid. CKW 107/531, HMS 131/351

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Montgomery County Land and Corporation Records.  
Sentinel, January 12, 1956.  
Evening Star, August 24, 1958.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY approx. 1/2 acre

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE

Mark Walston

Candy Reed - Architectural Description

ORGANIZATION

Sugarloaf Regional Trails

DATE

April 10, 1978

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Box 87

TELEPHONE

926-4510

CITY OR TOWN

Dickerson

STATE

Maryland 20753

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: ~~Maryland Historical Trust~~  
~~The Shaw House, 21 State Circle~~  
~~Annapolis, Maryland 21401~~  
~~(301) 267-1438~~

## ACHS SUMMARY FORM

M: 19-13-3

1. Name Liberty Milling Company
2. Planning Area/Site Number 19/13 3. MNCPPC Atlas Reference Map 7  
B-16
4. Address Mateney Road and Route 118 Germantown
5. Classification Summary  
Category structure/site  
Ownership private  
Public Acquisition NA  
Status occupied  
Accessible yes: restricted  
Present use commercial  
Previous Survey Recording M-MCPC Federal State X County X Local     
(Title and date: Inventory of Historical Sites - 1976)
6. Date c. 1895 7. Original Owner Bowman Brothers
8. Apparent Condition  
Good (Silos)  
a. Ruins (Mill) c. Original Site  
b. Altered
9. Description: In 1970 a fire destroyed the Liberty Milling Company. All that remains of the company's plant is a cluster of six poured concrete silos arranged in two rows of three. On the south side there are two adjacent, east and west structures. The west is considerably taller and narrower, the east has double metal doors. Both have raised seam metal siding and gable roofs covered with the same material.
10. Significance: This steam-operated grain mill, located on the railroad -- the dominant transportation mode of the late 19th and early 20th centuries -- took business from the water powered mills located on almost every creek in the County. In turn, in the 1960s it lost its position to larger and more modern milling operations that had other locational advantages. In 1895 William U. Bowman, Charles R. Bowman and Eldridge Z. Bowman purchased an 8,000 square foot lot in Germantown next to the B&O Railroad depot. They constructed a steam-operated flour mill on this prime commercial lot and prospered, extending the mill tract out to Route 118 by 1911. The mill, however, burned to the ground in 1914, and although the Bowman Brothers rebuilt it, they soon sold the operation for \$25,000 to a new firm -- Liberty Milling Company. The Liberty Milling Company immediately began improving the operation. By the 1950's the Company had \$1 million sales and was the second largest mill in the state, catering to a world flour market. However, despite concerted efforts to keep pace with the modernizing milling industry, the Company lost business and was sold in 1967 to Carroll V. Grosse of Maryland, Inc. It continued to lose business and was soon shut down. The mill burned in the early 1970's.
11. Date researched and researcher April 1978 Mark Walston
12. Compiler Gail Rothrock 13. Date Compiled 2/79 <sup>Candy Reed - Architectural Description</sup>  
14. Designation Approval
15. Acreage c. 1/2 acre